

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**  
**ABOUT NOAA FISHERIES' AUGUST 2004 ENDANGERED SPECIES**  
**ACT DECISION TO CONDUCT A STATUS REVIEW OF**  
**CHERRY POINT HERRING, PUGET SOUND**

**Q. Does this decision mean that NOAA Fisheries is likely to list Cherry Point herring under the ESA?**

A. Not necessarily. It means only that NOAA Fisheries determined that the petition presented enough substantial scientific and commercial information to indicate that the petitioned action may be warranted.

**Q. Did NOAA Fisheries receive one or two herring petitions earlier this year?**

A. Two. NOAA Fisheries received the first on Jan. 22, 2004. The agency received the second petition supplementing the first on May 14, 2004.

**Q. Why did NOAA Fisheries reject one petition to review the status of Cherry Point herring under the ESA, but accept the other petition?**

A. The agency determined that the January 22, 2004, petition failed to present substantial scientific and commercial information to indicate that the petition action may be warranted. However, NOAA Fisheries determined that the additional information provided in the May 14, 2004, petition does present substantial scientific and commercial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted.

**Q. Didn't NOAA Fisheries already review Pacific herring under the ESA?**

A. Yes. As a result of a petition filed in 1999, NOAA Fisheries conducted a status review of Pacific herring stocks in Puget Sound and the surrounding waters. The agency found that stocks of herring in Puget Sound, including the Cherry Point herring stock, belonged to a larger group or population unit of Pacific herring consisting of inshore stocks from Puget Sound and the Strait of Georgia. In NOAA Fisheries' 2001 status review, the agency concluded that while several of the stocks included in the Georgia Basin population unit were at "depressed" levels, the majority of the stocks appeared "stable and healthy." When analyzed collectively, NOAA Fisheries concluded that the Georgia Basin population unit of Pacific herring did not require protection under the ESA. This new status review will revisit whether Cherry Point herring are a separate stock.

**Q. What happens now that NOAA Fisheries has accepted the petition list Cherry Point herring under the ESA?**

A. NOAA Fisheries is soliciting information and comments on inshore herring stocks from Puget Sound and the Strait of Georgia such as: biological data; abundance and biomass; trends in abundance and distribution; natural and human-influenced factors that cause variability in survival, distribution, and abundance; and current or planned activities and their possible impact on Pacific herring, such as harvest measures and habitat actions. The agency is particularly interested in such information for the period since the 2001 status review of Pacific herring. NOAA Fisheries is beginning to review the status of Cherry Point herring, and within 12 months of receiving the petition, by May 14, 2005, will make a determination on whether the petitioned action is warranted.